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## SUCCESS STORY

# Digital Lessons Reach Rural India

**USAID is improving children's learning experiences through communications technologies**



Photo: Anita Khemka

*Children during an Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program in the classroom at the Govt. Higher Primary School, Karnataka, India*

**Combining technology tools with sound pedagogy and effective teacher training, USAID and its partners are developing high-quality, interactive radio, video, and computer programs that simplify the teaching of difficult concepts and enhance children's learning experience. T4 currently reaches more than 24 million children.**

According to estimates, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for elementary schools (Classes I–VIII) increased in India from 81.6% in 2001–02 to 94.9% in 2004–05. However, the drop out rate has remained high at 48.71% at the elementary level in 2004–2005, a decline of only 5.94 percentage points from 2001–02. Irrelevant and uninteresting lessons and low teacher proficiency coupled with financial and social barriers discourage many children from attending school and contribute to these high dropout rates.

A USAID supported education program is bringing about a slow revolution in India, changing the face of education in thousands of government schools in the rural, urban, and remote tribal areas of six of India's poorer states.

USAID with Education Development Centre (EDC) launched the Technology Tools for Teaching and Training, or T4, in 2004 to help overcome these obstacles by improving children's learning experiences through communications technologies. Combining technology tools with sound pedagogy and effective teacher training, USAID and its partners have developed high-quality, interactive radio, video, and computer programs that simplify the teaching of difficult concepts in various subjects, including language, math, science, and social studies. These new approaches enhance children's learning experiences, increase attendance, and improve learning outcomes.

More than 550,000 teachers have received training, teaching tools, teacher guides, and reference materials as part of the program. The program has also created an accessible digital library that makes digital learning materials in several Indian languages more widely available to teachers throughout the country.

Seven state governments - Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Delhi and Bihar - are already partnering in T4. State governments contribute in a variety of ways, providing equipment (radios, TV sets, computers etc.) broadcast fees, teacher guides, teacher training, and program production costs, with senior government officials of the state education departments very supportive of the program.